

Message Text

PAGE 01 BRIDGE 01591 01 OF 02 231834Z

70

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 DHA-02 SCCT-01 SY-05 LAB-04 COME-00 EB-07

SIL-01 /082 W

----- 094285

R 202024Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1303

INFO AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

AMEMBASSY NASSAU

AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

COMNAVFORCARIB

CINCLANT FOR POLAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BRIDGETOWN 1591

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR,PGOV,PINR

SUBJ: GENERAL ELECTIONS: THE CAMPAIGN BEGINS IN EARNEST

SUMMARY

THE GOVERNMENT HAS CALLED GENERAL ELECTIONS FOR SEPTEMBER 2, THE SECOND GENERAL ELECTIONS SINCE INDEPENDENCE. IN THE LIGHT OF RECENT SETBACKS FOR THE GOVERNMENT, SO PROXIMATE A DATE SEEMS UNPROPITIOUS, AND MAY BE ACCOUNTED FOR -- ACCORDING TO SPECULATION -- BY PRIME MINISTER BARROW'S EITHER HAVING EXERCISED POOR POLITICAL JUDGMENT OR HIS WANTING TO STEP DOWN. BARROW IS IN SUCH CURRENT DISESTEEM THAT MANY HERE BELIEVE HE ACTUALLY WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR KILLING THE GOVERNOR GENERAL -- WHO DIED OF A HEART ATTACK SHORTLY AFTER AN INTERVIEW WITH BARROW. IT SHOULD BE A CLOSE RACE, WITH THE OPPOSITION AS OF NOW A SLIGHT FAVORITE TO WIN. THE CAMPAIGN, AS EXPECTED, IS ON NON-IDEOLOGICAL GROUNDS AND FOCUSED
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BRIDGE 01591 01 OF 02 231834Z

ON DOMESTIC AFFAIRS ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY. IF THE OPPOSITION OVERTURNS THE GOVT, WE EXPECT THAT THE PEOPLES REPUBLIC OF CHINA WILL FINALLY BE RECOGNIZED. A CLOSER RELATIONSHIP WITH CUBA WOULD ALSO BE ESTABLISHED, BUT THIS WOULD OCCUR WHICHEVER

PARTY EXERCISES POWER. THE OPPOSITION WOULD TAKE THESE STEPS IN WHAT IT WOULD SEE AS A RATIONALIZATION OF POLICY, NOT BECAUSE IT IS LEFT OF THE RULING PARTY OR ANTI-US. ITS LEADERS WOULD PROBABLY NOT RESORT TO BARROW'S THEME OF "DESTABILIZATION". WHICHEVER PARTY IS IN WHEN THE NEGOTIATION FOR THE CONTINUANCE OF THE US NAVAL BASE BEGINS -- THE AGREEMENT EXPIRES ON DECEMBER 31, 1977 -- WILL ASK A CONSIDERABLE PRICE. A BARBADOS LABOUR PARTY VICTORY WOULD PROBABLY BE IN US INTERESTS, ALL THINGS CONSIDERED, HOWEVER. END SUMMARY

1. THE GOVT HAS SET SEPTEMBER 2 AS THE DATE OF GENERAL ELECTIONS. THIS WILL BE THE SECOND GENERAL ELECTIONS SINCE INDEPENDENCE IN 1966, THE FIRST HAVING TAKEN PLACE IN 1971. WHY THE GOVT SHOULD HAVE CHOSEN SO EARLY A DATE IS NOT CLEAR. ELECTIONS WERE NOT CONSTITUTIONALLY DUE UNTIL JANUARY 14, 1977 AT THE LATEST, AND THE EXPECTATION HAD BEEN THAT PRIME MINISTER ERROL BARROW WOULD WAIT AS LONG AS POSSIBLE IN THE HOPE THAT HIS POLITICAL FORTUNES WOULD IMPROVE. BY ALL ESTIMATES, THE RULING DEMOCRATIC LABOUR PARTY (DLP) HAS BEEN IN A DECLINE SINCE THE YEAR BEGAN. A BY-ELECTION LOST IN FEBRUARY, FOLLOWED BY ANOTHER BY-ELECTION DEFEAT IN MAY, THE DEFECTION OF MRS. GERTRUDE EASTMOND, A POPULAR MEMBER OF THE ASSEMBLY, FROM THE RULING PARTY, THE POOR RECEPTION GIVEN GOVT'S BUDGET PRESENTATION, THE CHARGES BY THE OPPOSITION BARBADOS LABOUR PARTY (BLP) THAT SUCH PROMINENT DLP FIGURES AS THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AND ATTORNEY GENERAL, GEORGE MOE, AND BARBADOS PERMANENT REP TO THE U.N., J. CAMERON TUDOR, HAD RECEIVED IMPROPER PAYMENTS FROM SYDNEY ALLEYNE, A BARBADIAN FINANCIER OF UNFAVORABLE REPUTATION -- SUCH FACTORS AS THESE HAD LED TO BELIEF THAT THE PRIME MINISTER WOULD CONCLUDE THAT NOW WAS NOT THE PROPITIOUS TIME FOR AN ELECTION. FURTHER, TO MAKE MATTERS WORSE FOR THE DLP, ON THE VERY DAY THAT THE DATE WAS SET AND PARLIAMENT PROROGUED, THE MUCH-RESPECTED GOVERNOR GENERAL, SIR WINSTON SCOTT, DIED OF A HEART ATTACK. IT IS POPULAR BELIEF IN AND AROUND BRIDGETOWN THAT THE PRIME MINISTER, WHO SAW SIR WINSTON JUST BEFORE HIS DEATH, SO UPSET THE 76-YEAR OLD GOVERNOR GENERAL, WHO HAD HAD A SERIES OF HEART ATTACKS IN MARCH AS TO BE THE CAUSE
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BRIDGE 01591 01 OF 02 231834Z

OF HIS DEATH. SOME OF THOSE WHO BELIEVE THIS EVEN PROFESS TO THINK THE PRIME MINISTER ACTED DELIBERATELY. THIS IS A REFLECTION OF THE DISESTEEM THAT HAS BEFALLEN THE ONCE VERY POPULAR BARROW.

2. WHY HAS BARROW CHOSEN THIS TIME FOR THE ELECTIONS? PROBABLY NOT EVEN THOSE WHO ARE WITHIN THE INNER COUNCILS OF THE DLP KNOW THE ANSWER TO THIS. BARROW RUNS THE PARTY AUTOCRATICALLY AND MAY WELL HAVE HIT UPON THE DATE THROUGH SHEER WHIM-- AS, IF HIS OWN STATEMENT IS TAKEN AT FACE VALUE, HE DECIDED UPON THE LAST CABINET RESHUFFLE. THERE ARE SPECULATIONS, OF COURSE: ONE HAS IT THAT THE PRIME MINISTER HAS SIMPLY LOST HIS POLITICAL JUDGEMENT, AND, INDEED, THERE IS MUCH RECENT EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THIS. HE

LED THE CAMPAIGNS FOR THE TWO BY-ELECTIONS POORLY, MAKING TACTICAL DECISIONS THAT CLEARLY LOST VOTES, AND HE RECENTLY BEGAN CHARGING THE U.S. WITH ATTEMPTS TO "DESTABLIZE" HIS GOVT, A MISCALCULATION AT LEAST THUS FAR SINCE, IF ANYTHING, IT SEEMS TO HAVE ALIENATED RATHER THAN GAINED POTENTIAL SUPPORTERS. (HE HIMSELF MAY FINALLY HAVE REALIZED THIS, SINCE HE HAS NOT MENTIONED "DESTABILIZATION" IN ALMOST TWO MONTHS.) ANOTHER SPECULATION IS THAT THE PRIMIN DOES NOT REALLY CARE TO REMAIN IN OFFICE; IN SUPPORT OF THIS THEORY, IT IS ARGUED, HE IS SICK, HE HAS BEEN IN OFFICE 15 YEARS, HE HAS MADE IT FINANCIALLY (HE HAS) AND HE WANTS TO GET OUT AND ENJOY IT. ANOTHER VIEW HAS IT THAT BARROW REALIZES THAT THE COUNTRY IS IN ECONOMIC DECLINE (IT IS) AND THAT THERE IS NO SOLUTION AND WANTS TO GET OUT BEFORE THE CRASH. THE LATTER TWO SPECULATIONS ARE NOT MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE, OF COURSE.

3. ALL THIS IS NOT TO SAY THAT A DLP DEFEAT IS A FOREGONE CONCLUSION, ALTHOUGH AT THIS TIME MOST POLITICAL OBSERVERS DO GIVE THE RULING PARTY LESS THAN A 50 PERCENT CHANCE. IF THE DLP IS RETURNED, IT IS ALMOST CERTAIN TO BE WITH MUCH LESS THAN THE 18 OF 24 SEATS THAT PARTY WON IN THE GENERAL ELECTIONS OF 1971, AND LESS EVEN THAN THE 16 SEATS IT NOW HAS (WITH 7 BLP AND ONE INDEPENDENT SEAT). IF THE DLP DOES WIN, IT IS EXPECTED TO BE A VICTORY THAT HAS BEEN NARROWLY WON AND WON LARGELY BECAUSE OF SOME BLP GAFFE.

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BRIDGE 01591 02 OF 02 232255Z

70

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 DHA-02 SCCT-01 SY-05 LAB-04 COME-00 EB-07

SIL-01 /082 W

----- 097028

R 202024Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1304

INFO AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

AMEMBASSY NASSAU

AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

COMNAVFORCARIB

CINCLANT FOR POLAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BRIDGETOWN 1591

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PGOV, PINR

SUBJ: GENERAL ELCTIONS: THE CAMPAIGN BEGINS IN EARNEST

4. THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN BEGAN IN EARNEST ON AUGUST 18, NOMINATION DAY. AT A RALLY IN BRIDGETOWN'S TRAFALGAR SQUARE, AT WHICH SEVERAL OF ITS CANDIDATES SPOKE AND ALMOST ALL WERE INTRODUCED, THE RULING PARTY REVEALED THE THEMES IT WILL PLAY IN THE TWO WEEKS THAT REMAIN BEFORE THE ELECTIONS. THE DLP IS PRESENTING ITSELF AS THE PARTY OF THE MASSES, THE OPPOSITION AS THE PARTY OF THE CLASSES. ITS LEADERS EMPHASIZE THAT IT WAS THE DLP, AND PRIMIN BARROW HIMSELF, WHICH BROUGHT THE COUNTRY TO INDEPENDENCE AND IMPLY THAT THE OPPOSITION HAD BEEN AGAINST THE MOVE. THEY WOULD HAVE THE ELECTORATE BELIEVE THAT, WHILE THE DLP IS THE PARTY OF THE "COLORED MAN" (THEIR TERM), THE OPPOSITION IS THE SUCCESSOR OF THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY, WHICH REPRESENTED WHITE INTERESTS PRIOR TO INDEPENDENCE. IN TRAFALGAR SQUARE THAT NIGHT, SEVERAL
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BRIDGE 01591 02 OF 02 232255Z

CANDIDATES MADE OBLIQUE ALLUSIONS TO THE DEGREE OF WHITENESS AND THE "BRITISHNESS" OF LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION J.M. G. "TOM" ADAMS. AFTER TEN YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE, IT WOULD SEEM THAT THE DLP FINDS IT EXPEDIENT TO CAMPAIGN AGAINST COLONIALISM, AND SINCE THERE ARE NO LONGER ANY COLONIALISTS TO BE FOUND, WILL PORTRAY THE OPPOSITION AS THEIR SUCCESSORS, POSSESSED OF ALL THEIR WICKEDNESS, INCLUDING EVEN THEIR RACIAL PREJUDICES. ONE DLP CANDIDATE WENT SO FAR AS TO ACCUSE A BLP MEMBER OF THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY OF HAVING REFERRED TO ANOTHER DLP FIGURE AS A "NIGGERMAN." (ALL THREE ARE LARGELY, IF NOT ENTIRELY, OF AFRICAN DESCENT.) FROM WHAT WAS SAID IN TRAFALGAR SQUARE, IT WOULD SEEM THAT ANOTHER THEME IS TO BE THAT THE OPPOSITION IS REALLY NOT A UNIFIED PARTY -- THAT THERE IS MUCH DISSENSION WITHIN BLP RANKS AND LACK OF CONFIDENCE IN ADAMS' LEADERSHIP--AND THERE-

FORE SHOULD NOT BE TRUSTED WITH THE GOVT OF THE ISLAND. SEVERAL CANDIDATES ALSO REFERRED TO THE POOR STATE OF THE ECONOMY, BUT AS A REASON FOR KEEPING THE RULING PARTY IN POWER, OF COURSE: THE WORLD ECONOMIC CRISIS BROUGHT ABOUT BY THE OIL CARTEL'S RAISING OF PRICES, AND WHICH HAS SEVERELY AFFECTED THE BARBADIAN ECONOMY, REQUIRED THAT THIS EXPERIENCED GOVERNMENT AND PRIME MINISTER BE RETAINED.

5. THE OPPOSITION'S MAIN THEME SEEMS TO BE THE GOVT'S ARROGANCE AND CORRUPTION: "VOTE BLP -- A PARTY YOU CAN TRUST", OR "NO TRICKS IN 76" READ THE BUMPER STICKERS. THIS WAS ALSO THE BLP THEME IN THE LAST GENERAL ELECTIONS CAMPAIGN, AND THE PARTY WAS SOUNDLY DEFEATED. IT MAY HAVE EFFICACY NOW, HOWEVER, SINCE PRIMIN BARROW AND OTHERS OF HIS GOVERNMENT HAVE DEMONSTRATED WHAT MIGHT BE TERMED ARROGANCE ON SEVERAL RECENT OCCASIONS AND ARE WIDELY BELIEVED TO HAVE WAXED

PROSPEROUS WHILE IN OFFICE. DURING THIS TERM, THERE WAS A REVIVAL OF THE CHARGES OF CORRUPTION IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, AND CHARGES OF SUCH, AS WELL AS OF MALADMINISTRATION, IN THE HOUSING AUTHORITY AND THE ISLAND'S SOLE GENERAL HOSPITAL. ON TELEVISION FROM THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY ON JULY 30, THE OPPOSITION LEADER -- AS PART OF HIS RESPONSE TO THE JUST-DELIVERED BUDGET SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER -- ACCUSED TWO PROMINENT DLP FIGURES, MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AND ATTORNEY GENERAL MOE AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE TO THE U.N. TUDOR, CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BRIDGE 01591 02 OF 02 232255Z

OF HAVING IMPROPERLY RECEIVED MONEY FROM THE DISREPUTABLE SYDNEY ALLEYNE. ADAMS HAD IN HAND, HE TOLD THE HOUSE AND TELEVISION AUDIENCE, COPIES OF THE CANCELLED CHECKS. AND APPARENTLY HE DID, SINCE MOE LATER EXPLAINED THAT THE MONEY PAID HIM WAS RENTAL FOR A PROPERTY BELONGING TO HIS MOTHER. THE GOVT COULD NOT EXPLAIN THE PAYMENTS TO TUDOR BECAUSE HE WAS ABROAD. COULD NOT HE RETURN? MANY ASKED. HE HAS NOT DONE SO YET. A CLOUD OF CORRUPTION HAS DESCENDED ON THE DLP AND IT HAS NOT YET BEEN DISPELLED. AT THE TRAFALGAR SQUARE MEETING, IT WAS CLEAR THAT THE DLP SPEAKERS WERE STUNG BY ADAMS' CHARGES: MOE, IT WAS EXPLAINED, AS HE HAD EXPLAINED IT, RECEIVED THE MONEY AS RENT FOR HIS MOTHER'S HOUSE, WHICH SHE HAD HAD TO VACATE FOR A NURSING HOME. THIS RESPONSE WAS NOT ALTOGETHER SATISFACTORY AND THE CHARGE AGAINST TUDOR REMAINS UNANSWERED.

6. NOT ASTONISHINGLY, IT WILL BE A CAMPAIGN DEVOID OF A COMPETITION BETWEEN OPPOSING POLITICAL PHILOSOPHIES. THE FACT IS -- AND WE HAVE THIS FROM NO LESS AN AUTHORITY THAN THE OPPOSITION LEADER, WHO CONFIDED IT TO EMBASSY OFFICERS SEVERAL MONTHS AGO -- THERE ARE NO IDEOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THESE TWO PARTIES. (THIRD PARTIES ARE NOT CONCEDED ANY CHANCE OF WINNING A SEAT, THOUGH MRS. EASTMOND, RUNNING AS AN INDEPENDENT, MIGHT.) THE OPPOSITION IS SAYING THAT IN DOMESTIC AFFAIRS -- AND THE CAMPAIGN HAD BEEN AND WILL PROBABLY CONTINUE TO BE ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY ABOUT DOMESTIC AFFAIRS -- IT CAN DO WHAT THE RULING PARTY HAS BEEN DOING, DO IT BETTER, DO IT WITHOUT CORRUPTION, DO IT WITH GREATER CONCERN FOR THE MASS OF BARBADIANS.

7. IN THEIR APPROACH TO FOREIGN AFFAIRS, THERE MAY BE SOME DIFFERENCES ON PARTICULAR ISSUES, BUT THE ORIENTATION OF BOTH PARTIES IS ESSENTIALLY THE SAME. THE BLP WOULD FAVOR WHAT ITS LEADERS MIGHT TERM A RATIONALIZATION OF TWO ASPECTS OF BARBADOS' FOREIGN RELATIONS. THE MAN WHO IS THE "SHADOW MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS" (ALTHOUGH ADAMS HIMSELF MIGHT ASSUME THE PORTFOLIO IF THE BLP IS VICTORIOUS), MEMBER OF THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY HENRY FORDE, TOLD EMBASSY OFFICERS NOT LONG AGO THAT HIS PARTY DID NOT FAVOR THE GOVT'S POLICY OF THE NON-RECOGNITION OF THE PEOPLES REPUBLIC OF CHINA (BARBADOS HAS CONTINUED RELATIONS WITH THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA, AND RECEIVES SUBSTANTIAL ASSISTANCE FROM TAIWAN), SINCE THE US ITSELF NOW HAD CONTACT WITH PEKING.

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 BRIDGE 01591 02 OF 02 232255Z

FROM WHAT FORDE SAID, AND FROM WHAT WE HAVE HEARD ELSEWHERE, BARBADOS MIGHT BE EXPECTED ALSO TO ENLARGE CONTACT WITH CUBA, PRIMARILY BECAUSE THE OTHER ENGLISH-SPEAKING CARIBBEAN MEMBERS HAVE MUCH MORE EXTENSIVE RELATIONS. THE DLP, IF RETURNED, WOULD PROBABLY ALSO MOVE CLOSER TO CUBA. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE BLP IN OFFICE WOULD BE UNLIKELY TO RESORT TO BARROW'S THEME OF "DESTABILIZATION" BY THE US, AND INDEED IT SEEMS THAT BARROW HIMSELF MAY HAVE DISCARDED IT, REALIZING IT WAS UNREWARDING POLITICALLY. WHILE BARROW WAS ON HIS DESTABILIZATION THEME, SEVERAL MEMBERS OF THE OPPOSITION WERE CRITICAL OF HIM FOR IT. WHICHEVER PARTY IS IN OFFICE WHEN THE NEGOTIATIONS FOR THE CONTINUANCE OF THE US BASE ON THE ISLAND TAKE PLACE (THE LEASE EXPIRES DECEMBER 31, 1977) WILL DEMAND SUBSTANTIAL COMPENSATION.

8. ALL CONSIDERED, IT PROBABLY WOULD BE BETTER FOR US INTEREST IF THE BLP WERE VICTORIOUS. ONLY IF, CONTRARY TO ALL EXPECTATIONS, THE DLP WERE TO WIN THE ELECTION BY AN EVEN LARGER MAJORITY THAN THE LAST TIME -- A VICTORY WHICH MIGHT WELL SUGGEST TO BARROW THAT "DESTABILIZATION" WAS, IN FACT, A POLITICALLY USEFUL PLOY -- WOULD THE U.S. BE LIKELY TO FIND ITSELF IN A LESS FAVORABLE POSITION THAT IT NOW ENJOYS.
BRITTON

CONFIDENTIAL

<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 15 SEP 1999
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ELECTION CAMPAIGNS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 20 AUG 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: BoyleJA
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976BRIDGE01591
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: 11652 GDS
Errors: n/a
Film Number: D760322-0420
From: BRIDGETOWN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t197608103/baaaerwb.tel
Line Count: 300
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, TEXT ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 6
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: BoyleJA
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <21 MAY 2004 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <15 SEP 2004 by BoyleJA>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GENERAL ELECTIONS: THE CAMPAIGN BEGINS IN EARNEST SUMMARY THE GOVERNMENT HAS CALLED GENERAL ELECTIONS FOR
TAGS: PFOR, PGOV, PINR, BB
To: STATE INFO GEORGETOWN
KINGSTON
NASSAU
PORT OF SPAIN
COMNAVFORCARIB

CINCLANT FOR POLAD

Type: TE

Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006